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P-Miller, Jeanne
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Woody Makes a Funny

By Jeanne Miller

Dictator

Woody Allen's unique and satirical view of the madness of our times is hilariously evoked in "Bananas," his new comedy which opened yesterday at the Bridge.

The film is not without flaws, paramount among them Allen's loose, disjointed style which turns the outrageous humor into a series of one-liners that would better suit his nightclub act.

The film opens with Howard Cosell and the staff of ABC's "Wide World of Sports" avidly covering the "Assassination of the Week" which transpires on schedule with the death of the president of a fictional Latin American republic called San Marcos.

Allen, a timid Manhattan products tester, is urged to support the cause of a Castro-like rebel leader by his militant girl friend, Louise Lasser. And when she breaks up with him for his cowardice and disinterest in revolution, he takes a plane for San Marcos where he accidentally and improbably becomes dictator.

Some of Allen's sight gags and most of his verbal patter are the kind of inspired lunacy that defies description. He takes off in wildly amusing style on a variety of targets, including J. Edgar Hoover, the CIA, the Cuban Revolution, psychiatry and Jewish mothers.

Allen deftly creates a climate of contemporary insanity that always surrounds his own inept "Everyman" character. A Manhattan newspaper headline screams "New York Rifle Council Declares Death a Good Thing."

Allen, now a San Marcos "freedom fighter," comes to the United States to ap-

peal for foreign aid and becomes a hero to Miss Lasser, who agrees to marry him.

A final tasteless scene, in which Allen and Miss Lasser consummate their marriage on TV while Cosell describes the event for "Wide World of Sports," nearly destroys the film's overall flavor of delicious eccentricity.

But for the most part, Allen's comedic genius stands him in good stead. If the movie lacks continuity and cohesion, its rewards in terms of side-splitting moments are more than generous.

In Miss Lasser, Allen has a perfect foil for his own shy, inept, bumbling personality. She is fresh and saucy with a fine sure touch for farce.

Carlos Montalban is also properly arrogant and pompous as a Latin general who tries to set Allen up for the kill.